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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Radio Service
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Friday, June 9, 1939.

(For Broadcast Use Only)

Subject: "CANNING VEGETABLES". Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today I'm bringing you a few suggestions from the Federal Bureau of Home Economics---about canning vegetables. I've a tip or two about the equipment you should have for the peas---and beans---and beets that you may be putting up now. And I've some general pointers on canning methods.

Since my suggestions cover a wide variety of points, I'm passing them on to you in the form of a simple questionnaire. I'm going to ask the questions. And I'm going to give you the answers that have been supplied by specialists in the Bureau of Home Economics.

So first---for the most important item of all---the canner. "What kind of a canner is needed for putting up green peas and beans?"

The answer to that is---"Peas and beans---like practically all vegetables except tomatoes, are nonacid foods. Nonacid foods should be processed in a steam pressure canner. This is the only kind of canner in which you can get temperatures of 240 to 250 degrees Fahrenheit---the heat necessary to sterilize vegetables within a reasonable length of time.

"It is not safe to can nonacid vegetables in a water bath---or an oven canner---or in a steam canner without pressure, because the temperature in these canners never gets above the boiling point of water. At that temperature it is impossible to kill certain dangerous bacteria that may be in the vegetables---unless you want to process the containers 6 to 10 hours---or even longer. If these bacteria are not killed they may produce a toxin in the food."

Here's another general question---"It is possible to can every kind of vegetable at home?

And here's the answer---"It is not recommended that vegetables of the cabbage family--such as broccoli and brussels sprouts--be canned. These vegetables have sulphur compounds in them that break down during processing in the pressure canner and give the food a disagreeable taste and odor.

"Egg plant is another vegetable that is not attractive when it's canned. And it's impossible to can corn on the cob at home without special equipment."

Now switching back to another question on canning equipment---"Does it make any difference what size of container is used for vegetables?"

The answer---"Pint or quart glass jars and number 2 or number 3 tin cans are the best sizes for most vegetables. For tender green peas, pint jars and number 2 cans are best, because the peas will be overcooked and mushy at the longer processing times required for larger containers.

"Corn that is canned in quart jars should be put up whole-grain style. That is, the corn cut off the cob without scraping. With the thicker cream-style corn it's better to keep the containers small, because the heat penetrates it slowly."

Here's a question that comes up canning season after canning season---"Is it all right to use rubbers a second time?"

The answer is "no". "The best policy is to buy rubber rings new each year. They should be of good quality so they'll stand up under the temperature of processing. A simple way to test the ring is to double it together and press the fold with the fingers. The rubber shouldn't crack with this treatment. If it's a good rubber, it will also stretch to twice its length---then snap back into shape."

Now---for number five in my canning questionnaire. "If a lot of canning liquid is lost from the jars during processing is it all right to replace some of this liquid with water?"

And the answer to that one is also "no"---emphatically.

"Jars should never be opened after processing until it's time to use the vegetables. For when the containers are opened, the vegetables inside are no longer sterile. To keep, they must be processed over again.

"Some liquid will always be lost from glass jars, but this can be kept to a minimum by controlling the temperature carefully--keeping it constant throughout the processing. At the end of processing period take the canner off the fire and let it cool slowly. When the pressure gage says "zero" open the petcock immediately---but gradually so there'll be no sudden rushing out of steam."

Another perennial question about canned food is---"Do vegetables lose any food value during ordinary home canning?"

The nutrition specialists answer that one. They say:

"There will be some loss of vitamin C and vitamin B_1, because both are destroyed by heat. If the vegetables are blanched before canning there will be losses of all the water-soluble vitamins. Those include vitamin G and the pellagra-preventing factor---in addition to vitamins C and B_1.

"To best preserve vitamins in canning---put up vegetables as soon as possible after gathering. Serve the canning liquor along with the vegetables---because it contains considerable amounts of the water-soluble vitamins and minerals, that were originally in the vegetables.

"Canned tomatoes get special mention from the nutritionists---because if they are canned in the right way they lose practically none of their valuable vitamin C. As the canned tomatoes are stored, they may lose from one-third to one-half if stored for 6 months or longer. But even then, canned tomatoes are a good source of vitamin C in the diet."

And now---my final question---"How long will canned vegetables keep?

The answer is "indefinitely". "That is if they've been canned properly and stored in a cool place. But the quality is better the first year. So unless there's a big surplus on hand, it's good practice to can only one year's supply at a time."

And that concludes my vegetable canning questionnaire.